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Environment and Natural Resources Committee DRAFT Minutes -- amended

November 4, 2009 - 9:30 a.m.

Members Present: Jack Darin – Illinois Sierra Club, Martin Jaffe – University of

Illinois at Chicago, Patty Werner - Lake County SMC, Karla Kramer – US Fish and Wildlife Service, Lenore Beyer-Clow -Openlands, Ingrid Danler - Fox Waterway Agency, Jim

VanderKloot - USEPA, Joe Schuessler - MWRD, Kate Agasie – Metropolitan Mayors Caucus, Kama Dobbs – DuPage Mayors and

Managers Conference, Nancy Williamson – IDNR, Cathy Geraghty - Illinois Association of Conservation and Forest Preserve Districts, Sean Weidel – City of Chicago, Jeff Mengler –

Chicago Wilderness

Staff Present: Hala Ahmed, Bob Dean, Ryan Ames, Amy Talbot, Don Kopec,

Sean Glowacz

Others Present: Christina Seaman – Openlands, Jerrod Crawford – Openlands,

Emily Shroeder – Openlands

1.0 Call to Order

2.0 Agenda Changes and Announcements

Amy announced that CMAP is holding the 2009 Images of Northeastern Illinois photo contest during the month of November. Nancy announced that Chicago Wilderness, the Conservation Fund, and others would be holding a green infrastructure training the first week of December. She also announced that the Delta Institute would be holding a workshop on transportation and the environment in December.

3.0 Approval of Minutes from October 7, 2009

Minutes from the October 7, 2009 meeting were approved.

4.0 Coordinating Committees Update

The Planning Coordinating Committee did not meet in October. The Programming Committee met and approved the 2009 update to the Northeastern Illinois Regional Greenways Plan, which previously had had a wording issue over the reconversion of trails in railroad rights of way.

5.0 GO TO 2040 Update

Bob Dean presented a draft of the GO TO 2040 Preferred Scenario dated October 7, 2009. He remarked that the Preferred Scenario was framed in terms of recommendations for

regional infrastructure, local infrastructure, and policy context or the nonphysical environment. The Preferred Scenario recognizes that municipalities continue to have local land use control. It recommends more compact development, but not a regional standard for compactness. The Preferred Scenario puts a great deal of emphasis on resource conservation. Regional infrastructure on the environment side mainly includes green infrastructure. He suggested that most of the policy context recommendations would be uninteresting to ENR except perhaps for the green jobs and data transparency recommendations.

A committee member suggested that the discussion of green infrastructure should consider its function, not just its use for recreation or as "open space." Another member suggested that land protection and resource conservation should not be seen just as a regional concern: the Preferred Scenario needs to recognize the value of local efforts and try to integrate them into regional plans. There was uncertainty about the best terminology to use. "Natural areas" can be seen as better than "open space."

One member noted "disturbing trends" in talking about transit oriented development and mixed use as compact development, believing that those concepts have become a way to promote greenfield development well outside the existing urban envelope. This can happen by putting a commuter rail station in an exurban area. Bob responded that the preference in the Preferred Scenario is for both infill and transit orientation, but focusing too much on development location versus development/design characteristics (e.g., compactness, mix of uses, transit orientation) will make the Preferred Scenario contentious and hard to implement. It was pointed out as a side note that many original transit oriented developments were ventures by railroad holdings; now they are real estate ventures subsidized by public transportation.

Some committee members also felt that the Preferred Scenario needed to emphasize the promotion of health and well-being more, and connect those outcomes to protecting open space and natural resources. The documents needed to have a statement stating that water pollution reduction and flood mitigation as are benefits of the Preferred Scenario. A member asked for clarification on what local food systems recommendations would be; Bob responded that he would bring that to the ENR committee when complete. Health and obesity was recommended to be added under "quality of life." It was noted that biodiversity needed to be mentioned. It was also recommended that stormwater management infrastructure should be mentioned along with local green infrastructure practices.

The "unsiloing" recommendation was seen as a good one. A member suggested recommending strengthening regional planning, considering the fractured nature of the region. One member said he considered another benefit of unsiloing to be support for local initiatives, since federal and state regulations can stifle local innovation. Another member rejoined that regulations are there for a purpose; unsiloing should not mean that we sacrifice environmental quality. Bob said that the purpose was to promote flexibility where appropriate.

6.0 Model Water Conservation Ordinance

Hala Ahmed introduced that model water conservation ordinance she and others at CMAP are developing. The Northeastern Illinois Planning Commission had developed such an ordinance in 1980, but since then many laws and policies have changed. She explained the structure of the ordinance and noted that its technical specifications are being tied to EPA's WaterSense program to keep the ordinance from becoming obsolete. A member asked whether the ordinance was being framed for municipalities to pick and choose their ordinance requirements; Hala answered yes. It was thought that there would be little acceptance of the <25% turf requirement. Another member asked who would pay for rebates; Hala suggested that utilities could do so. It was also suggested that the ordinance needed to be tied to water rates; that could be a major incentive. Another member felt that since there are already conservation requirements for communities receiving Lake Michigan water, those should be used as a baseline from which to expand. Also, since the ordinance is taking a "cafeteria" approach, municipalities would need to have information on how to choose requirements; the best information would be cost-effectiveness.

7.0 Presentation on Compendium of Comprehensive Plans

Ryan Ames, a research assistant at CMAP, presented findings on the contents of local comprehensive plans in the region, referring to a PowerPoint. During discussion, it was suggested that updating the compendium could be a way to track coordination of local plans with GO TO 2040.

8.0 Other Business.

None.

9.0 Public comment

None.

10.0 Adjournment.

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Respectfully submitted,

Jesse Elam, CMAP staff liaison